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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 HARARE 001171

SIPDIS

NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR J FRAZER  
LONDON FOR C. GURNEY  
PARIS FOR C. NEARY  
BANGKOK FOR WIN DAYTON  
DS/OP/AF

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/09/2008

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PINR](#) [ASEC](#) [ZI](#) [MDC](#)

SUBJECT: TSVANGIRAI FACES NEW TREASON CHARGES, AWAITS BAIL  
HEARING: MUGABE DERIDES MDC, CONDEMNS OUTSIDE INTERFERENCE

Classified By: POLITICAL OFFICER PEGGY BLACKFORD FOR REASONS 1.5B/D

SUMMARY

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[11.](#) (C) AFTER A WEEK OF MASS ACTION WHICH PRODUCED LESS THAN THE OPPOSITION WOULD HAVE LIKED, MDC LEADER, MORGAN TSVANGIRAI FOUND HIMSELF UNDER ARREST FOR TREASON ONCE AGAIN.

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HE SPENT THE WEEKEND IN JAIL AND IS CURRENTLY AWAITING A RULING IN A BAIL HEARING. PRESIDENT MUGABE SOUNDED TRIUMPHANT IN SPEECHES OVER THE WEEKEND GLOATING OVER HIS GOVERNMENT'S ABILITY TO PREVENT DEMONSTRATIONS AND PLACING THE BLAME FOR "ILLEGAL" ACTIONS ON THE MDC AND ITS SUPPORTERS, THE BRITISH AND US EMBASSIES. NEGOTIATIONS MAY BE MORE DIFFICULT IF THE GOZ BELIEVES IT NOW HAS THE UPPER HAND.

MDC LEADER PUTS POSITIVE SPIN ON WEEK'S EVENTS  
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[12.](#) (U) AT A PRESS CONFERENCE HELD EARLY ON THE AFTERNOON OF JUNE 6 AT THE HOME OF THE MDC LEADER, MORGAN TSVANGIRAI TOLD JOURNALISTS AND DIPLOMATS THAT HE VIEWED THE WEEK'S MASS ACTION AS A SUCCESS. THE STAYAWAY HAD BEEN WIDELY SUPPORTED AND THE GOVERNMENT OF ZIMBABWE HAD ONLY PREVENTED MASS DEMONSTRATIONS BY MASSIVE AND WIDESPREAD USE OF THE POLICE AND MILITARY. HE PROMISED THAT ROLLING MASS ACTIONS WOULD CONTINUE WITHOUT NOTICE.

TSVANGIRAI ARRESTED ANEW ON FRESH TREASON CHARGES

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[13.](#) (C) SHORTLY AFTER THE CONCLUSION OF THE PRESS CONFERENCE, TSVANGIRAI WAS PICKED UP BY POLICE AND CHARGED WITH TREASON

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FOR ALLEGEDLY CALLING ON ZIMBABWEANS TO OUST MUGABE FROM POWER IN A NUMBER OF PUBLIC GATHERINGS OVER THE LAST FEW MONTHS. HE WAS INCARCERATED AT THE BORROWDALE POLICE STATION OVER THE WEEKEND. ACCORDING TO SPECIAL PRESIDENTIAL ADVISOR, GANDI MUDZINGWA, SEVERAL HIGH RANKING GOZ OFFICIALS INCLUDING THE MINISTER FOR STATE SECURITY AND THE HEAD OF THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE ORGANIZATION SOUGHT TO TALK TO TSVANGIRAI BUT HE WAS ALLOWED NO VISITORS EXCEPT FOR HIS WIFE. FATHER FIDELIS MUKONORI, WHO HAS BEEN TRYING TO FACILITATE DIALOGUE BETWEEN TSVANGIRAI AND MUGABE, ALSO SOUGHT TO SEE THE MDC LEADER AND

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TOLD MUDZINGWA THAT HE WAS TRYING TO ARRANGE A MEETING BETWEEN TSVANGIRAI AND MUGABE FOR THURSDAY. MUDZINGWA WAS SKEPTICAL THAT SUCH A MEETING WOULD TAKE PLACE. WELSHMAN NCUBE, SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE MDC, WAS ALSO BEING SOUGHT AND, AFTER STAYING OUT OF SIGHT FOR THE WEEKEND, HE PRESENTED HIMSELF FOR QUESTIONING BY THE POLICE MONDAY MORNING IN THE COMPANY OF HIS ATTORNEY.

TSVANGIRAI BAIL HEARING PENDING

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[14.](#) (SBU) AS OF LATE THIS AFTERNOON, JUNE 9, JUDGE GARWE WHO IS PRESIDING OVER THE ONGOING TREASON TRIAL BEFORE THE HIGH COURT DISMISSED THE GOVERNMENT'S APPLICATION TO AMEND CURRENT BAIL CONDITIONS WHICH WOULD HAVE PREVENTED TSVANGIRAI FROM SPEAKING IN PUBLIC. HE REFUSED, HOWEVER, TO ENTERTAIN THE DEFENSE'S APPLICATION FOR BAIL ON THE NEW CHARGES SAYING THAT THE MAGISTRATES COURT HAS JURISDICTION IN SUCH MATTERS UNLESS THERE IS CONCURRENCE WITH THE ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE. THE DEFENSE AND THE A.G. REACHED AGREEMENT ON THIS ISSUE AND BAIL WILL BE CONSIDERED TOMORROW MORNING BY THE HIGH COURT JUDGE ON DUTY.

MUGABE CLAIMS VICTORY, WARNS OUTSIDERS ABOUT INTERFERING  
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15. (SBU) BY LAST WEEK'S END, PRESIDENT MUGABE WAS CLEARLY FEELING THAT HE HAD COME OUT AHEAD. AT A RALLY IN THE COUNTRYSIDE ON FRIDAY, JUNE 6, HE JOKED WITH AN AUDIENCE OF SUPPORTERS ABOUT THE MDC AND WAS SCORNFUL OF TSVANGIRAI'S ASPIRATIONS TO THE PRESIDENCY. ACCORDING TO THE GOVERNMENT OWNED HERALD, HE WAS QUOTED AS LIKENING THE MDC LEADER TO A MAN REJECTED BY A WOMEN WHO NONETHELESS CONTINUES TO PURSUE HER. ON SATURDAY AT THE FUNERAL OF MAMA MAFUYANE, WIDOW OF THE LATE VICE-PRESIDENT JOSHUA NKOMO, THE PRESIDENT TOOK THIS RATHER INAPPROPRIATE OPPORTUNITY TO TELL THE BRITISH AND US EMBASSIES TO STOP HELPING THE MDC ACHIEVE AN ILLEGAL OBJECTIVE AND TO WARN THAT "THEIR INSTIGATION CANNOT BE TOLERATED FOREVER BY MY GOVERNMENT." A THOUSAND OR SO ZANU-PF SUPPORTERS IN THEIR BRAND NEW "NO TO MASS ACTION" T-SHIRTS APPLAUDED ENTHUSIASTICALLY.

COMMENT

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16. (C) ALTHOUGH LAST WEEK'S MASS ACTION WAS SUCCESSFUL IN CLOSING DOWN MOST BUSINESS IN HARARE AND OTHER CITIES, IT WAS SOMETHING OF A PR FAILURE. TSVANGIRAI APPARENTLY OVERESTIMATED HIS SUPPORTERS' COURAGE IN THE FACE OF PROBABLE VIOLENCE. HIS ANNOUNCEMENT THAT THE MDC HAD CANCELED DEMONSTRATIONS FOR FEAR OF INJURY TO THE PUBLIC SEEMED TO BE SPINNING THE NEWS AS BEST HE COULD. CERTAINLY MUGABE IS REACTING AS THOUGH HE IS FIRMLY IN CHARGE AND CAPABLE OF DEALING WITH ANY PESKY OPPOSITION THAT MIGHT ARISE. IF HE SINCERELY BELIEVES THIS, IT DOES NOT BODE WELL FOR SERIOUS NEGOTIATIONS. NONETHELESS, THE TRAIPSING OF ZANU-PF AND GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS TO TSVANGIRAI SHOWS THAT THE REGIME RECOGNIZES THAT IT HAS NO WAY OUT OF THE COUNTRY'S CRISIS. IN THAT CONTEXT, HEIGHTENING PRESSURE ON TSVANGIRAI AND THE MDC THROUGH NEW TREASON CHARGES AND DETENTION CAN BE ANOTHER WAY TO WEAKEN THE OPPONENT PRIOR TO UNAVOIDABLE DIALOGUE.

END COMMENT

SULLIVAN